



MPM
ADVISORY PLANNING BOARD
~~UN~~APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING
Greenbelt Community Center
November 19, 2014
Minutes Prepared by Jessica Bellah

I. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Gibbons, Keith Chernikoff, Jeff Lemieux, Matt Johnson, Isabelle Gournay, Maria Silvia Miller, and Nicole Williams (joined at 8:36 pm).

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Jessica Bellah and Terri Hruby

CITY LIAISON PRESENT: Mayor Emmett Jordan

ALSO PRESENT: 1 member of the public.

II. Agenda approved as amended – removal of minute approval.

III. Mrs. Hruby briefed on the Economic Development Study produced by Sage Policy Group.

The report is still in draft form and the final report/work session with the consultant expected in December 2014. Council has not officially referred the economic development report to APB and tonight is solely an opportunity to discuss the most recent draft and presentation by Sage Policy Group to Council. Mrs. Hruby presented the highlights of the study and the information gathering process through focus groups and other means.

The board discussed that the reported lower household median income may be tied to Greenbelt's historically smaller household size (with single earner incomes). Mrs. Hruby reviewed highlights of the demographics, housing, tax base and revenue base. Mr. Gibbons asked what taxes the city levees and how we compare to surrounding areas. Mr. Chernikoff commented that Greenbelt is a full service city with its own police department. APB requested to see the results of the open public survey conducted for the study. The board discussed their impression of age dynamics and the age groups they see moving into the city. Mr. Johnson stated that perception of the County school system is a large deterrent and the key for holding onto families with young children. He states that while the city has little control of this issue, it can address improved connectivity and infrastructure he feels will attract millennials. The board discussed what benefits this age group provides the city and what they feel this age group is looking for in selecting home/jobs sites.

Generally, the board founds that Sage provided a well written document that consolidates information already known, but would have liked it to delve more into strategy and an aspirational vision for improvement. The board discussed many of the recommendations in the report and believed they were not as well explained as they could be. The board discussed in detail the proposed tax credit that recommends a 6 year freeze on increased taxes for GHI members who substantially invest in improving their units. The board would like to see more strategies to implement the recommendations identified by Sage.

Mrs. Miller asked to discuss the recommendations for Roosevelt Center. She does not believe the city has the ability to implement the recommendations presented by Sage, especially concerning pressuring the landlord. Mrs. Hruby provided the board with a history of past working relationships and incentives the city has undergone regarding management of Roosevelt Center. She informed the board that the city has requested additional productive strategies be developed for Roosevelt Center. The group also discussed the proposed use of eminent domain including the negative perceptions attached to its use and legal restrictions on the end use of property acquired through this process.

The board discussed Sage's assessment that the city is too small to benefit greatly from an economic development staffer, group, or designated leader. APB would advise the council to seek and take advantage of existing citizen expertise in this area. The board discussed the input from business leaders on the business climate. Mayor Jordan reflected that the small sample size of self-selected focus group attendees may mean that other opinions exist in the business community. Mr. Lemieux asked if the business community has identified any issues in dealing with the police or council in developing their negative image of the city's business climate. Mr. Gibbons commented that marketing the city's location and other assets can be part of moving forward to create a strategy for attracting businesses and keeping them in Greenbelt.

Mayor Jordan asked the board for their response to the report's recommendations for combating aging housing stock. The board discussed the system of taxation for GHI members. The board discussed the application of the recommended tax credit to GHI and other housing in the city. The board discussed what additional housing may look like in historic greenbelt. Mrs. Hruba informed the board that there is a density cap for GHI.

Mr. Johnson expounded to the board his desire that APB develop a vision plan of redevelopment goals tied to specific existing development to help steer development and improve the economic environment. The board discussed details of such a plan and is supportive of the notion. Mrs. Hruba advised the board that for such an undertaking, the board should go through the process of formally requesting from council a referral to undertake this work. The board discussed details of what a visioning/expanded economic development strategy may look like. Mrs. Hruba advised the board that there is historical information, not currently all in one place, which could be applied to any efforts to build on the economic development report. The board discussed their experience of past vision and plan development in Greenbelt. The group discussed the role of APB moving forward and recommended that the next meeting be used to develop a proposal outlining next steps.

IV. Update on Planning Projects

Ms. Bellah briefly updated the board on new work at Greenbelt Station South Core Development. She reported on the work session council recently held with the development home builders. Ms. Bellah listed the new items that will likely be referred to APB for review in the coming months.

V. Other Business

Ms. Bellah confirmed with the board the 2015 meeting schedule of the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month.

VI. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.